



Governor's Highway Safety Program
Department of Public Safety
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671
ghsp.vermont.gov

Press Release

For Immediate Release

July 30, 2012, 2012

Betsy Ross, Public Information Officer, Governor's Highway Safety Program, 802-241-5511

Betsy.Ross@state.vt.us

Results of Vermont's 2012 Safety Belt Study

The Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP) reports they have received the results of the recently completed Annual Seat Belt Survey. The survey was conducted by the Vermont Center for Justice Research (VCJR), located in Randolph, VT. This year's statewide seatbelt use rate is 84.2%, which is down from 84.7% use rate in 2011. As in previous years, this year's survey was conducted during June and July at 82 various pre-determined sample sites located throughout the state. Data collectors, using laptop computers, surveyed front seat occupants of all vehicles passing the designated locations.

This survey methodology was initially developed by the Institute for Traffic Safety Management and Research, University at Albany, State University of New York to be consistent with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) 1998 guidelines for state observational surveys. The current design is reviewed and updated regularly and complies with these NHTSA guidelines for sampling and precision.

As in the past ten years, Vermont participated in the national *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) law enforcement campaign sponsored by NHTSA. CIOT is a federally funded effort to encourage motorists to buckle up for each and every trip. Nationwide CIOT is launched prior to the Memorial Day weekend, which is the unofficial kickoff to the summer driving season.

The following is a comparison of seatbelt use rate for this year and 2011 for each of Vermont's counties with the highest rate observed (88%) in Chittenden County and the lowest use rate (73.5%) in the combined Franklin/Grand Isle counties. It should be noted the use rate in Franklin/Grand Isle counties was recorded as 89.6% during the 2011 survey. Bennington County showed the largest use increase of 3.4%.

County	2011	2012
Chittenden	86.0%	88.0%
Bennington	82.2%	85.6%
Franklin/Grand Isle	89.6%	73.5%
Northeast Kingdom	77.7%	77.4%
Rutland	86.2%	86.4%
Washington/Lamoille	86.4%	87.6%
Windham/Orange/Windsor	84.7%	84.2%
Statewide	84.7%	84.2%

In addition to the overall usage rate, the annual survey has collected information on potentially correlated factors such as sex of the subject (driver or passenger) and type of vehicle, including standard auto, van, SUV, and pickup. Data on these factors are included in the following table.

County	Male	Female	Cars	Vans	SUVs	Pickups
Chittenden	84.9%	92.2%	89.6%	90.8%	89.5%	74.3%
Bennington	81.3%	90.8%	90.2%	89.8%	87.4%	69.8%
Franklin/Grand Isle	63.6%	80.6%	74.8%	82.9%	77.5%	58.1%
Northeast Kingdom	70.1%	86.2%	83.5%	78.8%	84.2%	59.6%
Rutland	80.3%	93.0%	88.9%	88.1%	92.2%	74.6%
Washington/Lamoille	82.3%	91.4%	89.5%	92.8%	93.1%	71/3%
Windham/Orange/Windsor	79.2%	91.1%	88.0%	87.8%	89.0%	69.7%
Statewide	78.9%	90.3%	87.4%	88.0%	88.4%	69.3%

Detailed usage rates continue to show notable variations. Highest rates continue to be found among females, while the lowest rates continue to be found among males and pickup truck drivers. Regionally, there is noticeably lower usage along the entire northern tier of the state, less than 80%, while other counties all exhibit higher usage rates, exceeding 85% in all but the southeastern most corner of the state.

So far, there have been 48 traffic fatalities in the state since the beginning of calendar year 2012. Of those 48 total deaths, 21 were unbelted. GHSP Chief, Ted Minall asks all Vermonters to “Please take that few seconds to buckle your seatbelt every time you get into your car or truck. Wearing a seatbelt will certainly improve your chances of surviving a motor vehicle crash.

###